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ABSTRACT

This guide is one in a series of publications addressing a variety of topics related to both management and instruction in continuing education. Based on an earlier study, the guide shows how a number of effective continuing education managers have turned the challenge of survival into opportunities to become valued parts of their institution. Of the themes developed in the publication, one is central: understanding the problems of other units and managers in the institution and determining how a continuing education division is particularly suited to addressing these problems. The guide is organized in six short sections that outline the important steps in building support for continuing education within the institution: (1) presenting the "self," i.e., showing how the self-interest of the continuing education division serves the self-interest of other university divisions; (2) maintaining regular contact with influential members of the institution; (3) adapting to the institutional context; (4) serving the institution through collaboration; (5) building relationships in the institution; and (6) turning challenge into opportunity by relating division strengths to institutional problems and priorities. Ten references are included in the booklet. (KC)

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Turning Challenge Into Opportunity

Securing Institutional Support for Continuing Higher Education

Faye L. Lesht

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Foreword

Turning Challenge Into Opportunity by Faye L. Lesht is one in a series of publications called the Guide Series. Addressing a variety of topics related to both management and instruction in continuing education, these publications are intended as guides for those having responsibilities for programs and units that operate programs. Dr. Lesht's guide is part of a group that addresses the management of continuing education. Included in that group are guides on market research, the management of credit programs, the management of continuing professional education programs, and the use of technology to manage continuing education.

Based on a highly regarded study, Dr. Lesht's material clearly shows how a number of effective continuing higher education managers have turned the challenge of survival into opportunities to become valued parts of their institution. Of the themes developed in her publication, one has remained particularly fascinating: understanding the problems of other units and managers in the institution and determining how a continuing education division is particularly suited to addressing these problems.

Dr. Lesht's guide encourages all of us to be less parochial and more attuned to the overall needs of our institution. The many specific examples and useful suggestions provide guidance on the shift in emphasis that the title suggests.

Charles E. Kozoll
Editor
Guide Series

About the Author

Faye L. Lesht works as a program director for the Division of Extramural Courses, Office of Continuing Education and Public Service, at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She has lectured at the university on the topic of securing institutional support for continuing higher education, as well as at the 1988 National University Continuing Education Association national conference in Philadelphia. She received her doctorate in administration, higher and continuing education from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Dedication:
For My Parents

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Introduction

A major challenge is facing continuing higher education divisions: how to secure institutional support. The type of support varies with the situation. What does not vary is the need to receive enough support from the parent organization so that the division can survive. To do so, the division must convince key decision makers that its work is critical to the institution. Creating a favorable impression is therefore a central component of securing support. The essential elements of the support-securing process are presented in the pages that follow.

This guide is based on a study that I conducted during the 1986-87 academic year. Quotations used in the guide are from the study. Because confidentiality was assured, names of the institutions and the participants are omitted. Seven institutions in a midwestern state were used in this study, four of them public and three private. Forty interviews were conducted: three deans, four directors of continuing education, eighteen staff members, and fifteen individuals from within the institutions identified by the unit heads as important to the support-securing process.

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In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Erving Goffman (1959) developed a theory for understanding how people manage the way others perceive them. Referred to as "the art of impression management," Goffman's theory provides a framework for understanding self-presentation in social situations. Because some elements of this framework can help us understand the process of securing support, they are presented in this section.

In social situations, Goffman says, people are like actors trying to convince an audience that their act is honest and important. Similarly, administrators in continuing higher education try to persuade key decision makers that the division's work is important and can benefit the institution. The message of division administrators is that their unit serves the institution in a unique way. As an important institutional force, the division therefore deserves human, fiscal, and technological support.

As Goffman notes, to convince an audience that an act is legitimate the actors must have some leverage. One form of leverage applicable to continuing educators is "exchange." Through exchange relationships, the division can enhance its ability to secure institutional support. These relationships give the division a chance to show that its work helps the institution.

The advantages of a continuing education division are many-layered. A continuing education division can offer faculty members the opportunity to expand their research, enhance their teaching, and further their professional growth. With additional exposure through continuing education programs, the institution's recruitment efforts may lead to increased enrollments. Offering programs to people in the work force, these divisions can also help the institution serve a public that might otherwise be neglected. Thus involved in continuing education, the institution can serve adult students in the community.

At one public institution with a strong teaching orientation, it was no secret that the president wanted to improve relations between the institution and the community. The dean of continuing education learned about the president's intentions through discussions with top-level officials and through the president's own remarks. Keeping in mind the institution's strong teaching and service mission, the dean recommended a special degree program that would attract local professionals to the university.

The program was approved, enrollments grew, and public relations improved. As the president stated in an annual address:

> I am encouraged by the success of our efforts in continuing education. Recognizing that the number of older adults is increasing and that there is a demand among these "nontraditional students" for course work designed to keep them informed about technologies and vocational challenges, the [continuing education unit] established a program through which 866 people have been admitted to the university during the past two years . . . . I applaud the efforts of those departments which have recognized this opportunity and are offering classes at times when this group of people, most of them employed, can be accommodated. The provost and the dean of continuing education, with my encouragement and blessing, will be examining additional ways to serve nontraditional students.

This program for adult part-time students highlights continuing education's role in serving a public that the university might have otherwise neglected. It also illustrates one form of "exchange": doing something for the institution and in return receiving institutional support.

According to Goffman, actors usually perform in groups with a group leader, or director, and a supporting cast. The director is of course responsible for the group's performance, but the efforts of the entire cast are critical to the overall production. Similarly, division leaders and their staffs must work together to secure institutional support.

Obtaining support is, in large part, a promotional task. Division leaders play a vital role in the internal promotion process. Because of their rank, they often have access to key institutional decision makers. Division leaders ultimately direct and guide the promotional effort. Yet they must spend a great deal of time educating influential individuals about the division. As one director of a continuing higher education unit noted:

> If I fail in any way, I think I fail often in not giving enough attention to the nitty-gritty procedures which I'm sure could be made more efficient and client oriented . . . but I'm literally out there in the university more than I'm in the division. I'm making sure that there aren't surprises. Almost 70 percent of the time, I'm out there.

Interaction between division leaders and institutional leaders is essential. Thus the "nitty-gritty" procedures are often delegated to staff members. Important in their own right, these procedures usually include contacts with the faculty and with members of support-staff divisions in offering quality continuing education programs. Each actor in the division therefore plays an important role in projecting a favorable impression of

the division. Internal promotion is clearly best accomplished as an activity of the entire staff.

The challenge of securing institutional support can be viewed as an opportunity. Continuing higher education has much to offer. These divisions can help their colleges and universities in many ways, creating opportunities from the myriad of challenges faced by the division and the institution. But staff members have to let the institution's leaders know how the division's activities can further the institution's goals.

The purpose of this guide is to illustrate how challenge can be turned into opportunity for securing institutional support. The following four elements are essential to the process:

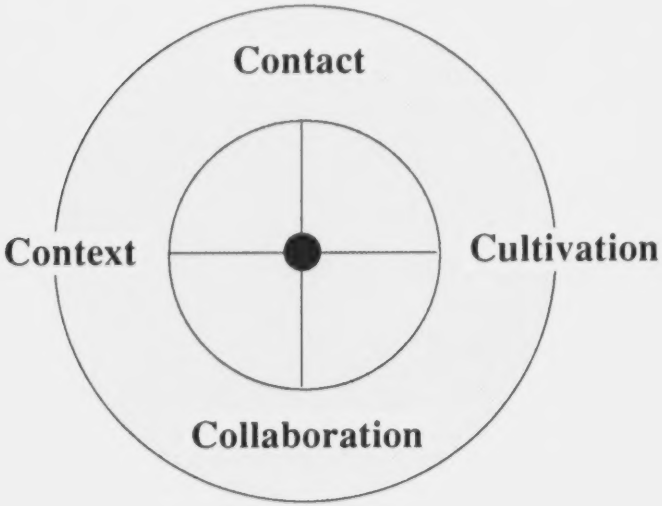
1. **Contact**: maintain regular contact with influential members of the institution.
2. **Context**: consider, and adapt to, the institutional context.
3. **Collaboration**: serve the institution.
4. **Cultivation**: cultivate relationships with members of the institution.

Illustrated in Figure 1, these four elements constitute a continuous and dynamic interactive process. One director of continuing education summarized the process of turning challenge into opportunity:

> We're serving our self-interests best when we're serving in a collaborative way with the self-interests of other divisions in the university so that success for us is success for them. That's the central point of my strategy [for securing institutional support].

The first step in the process is to view the challenge of securing institutional support as an opportunity for the division to demonstrate its worth. Now let's examine the four essential elements of the support-securing process. (See Figure 1 on page 6).

FIGURE 1. THE FOUR ELEMENTS ESSENTIAL TO SECURING INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION.



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Contact: Maintaining Regular Contact With Influential Members of the Institution

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Contact with influential members of the organization is critical for securing institutional support. For only through regular contact can relationships that provide mutual understanding of needs and concerns be developed. An important task is therefore to identify these key members.

People to Contact

The division head probably reports to an upper-level administrator—perhaps a provost or a chancellor, an associate provost or a vice chancellor. Occasionally, the division head may even be in touch with the institution's president. Contact must also be maintained with academic deans, heads of related support divisions (such as admissions), and influential faculty members. Division staff members may focus their efforts on department heads, faculty, members of support-staff divisions, as well as on some upper-level administrators.

The Opportunity in Contact

Contacts serve many purposes. They give division leaders a chance to learn about the institution's culture: its mission, values, traditions, and norms. If an institution emphasizes research, then faculty rewards will be based primarily on research. If another institution emphasizes teaching, its faculty members may be rewarded primarily on teaching performance. In addition, the way continuing education's role is perceived within the institution will depend on the attitudes, values, and norms of its leaders and on the institution's focus.

One private university told its continuing education division to drop $100,000 of programs that were regarded as recreational rather than educational. Although these "recreational" programs generated revenue, they failed to meet the university's criteria for meriting support.

As the division director at this institution stated:

> The limits on what one can be in a continuing education agency within a large university are really in some sense the academic and cultural limitations of the parent institution, in some ways, ninety percent of the time. And like an organ transplant there's always danger of rejection if the tissue looks too foreign. So it seems to me . . . one begins by looking at the history of the place, trying to feel

> for the parent institution, the self-expressions of the parent institution, which give you a clue as to the cultural limitations of what's possible in continuing education.

Clearly, divisions of continuing education must understand the institution and be willing to adapt to its culture.

Through its contacts, continuing education can learn about institutional challenges such as problems related to recruitment, enrollment, faculty development, and community relations. The dean of continuing education at the university mentioned in the previous section learned through contact with top-level officials that the president wanted to improve relations with the community. The dean could address that issue by offering educational programs to local professionals.

Through their contact with colleges, departments, and faculty, division members can gain insight into the problems of these units and use the division's strengths to help solve the problems. At one university, the school of business was having trouble collecting data of interest from certain corporations. Division members developed relationships with some of these corporations, offering them continuing education programs at little cost in exchange for the data. This arrangement not only benefited the school, but also strengthened the division's relationship with the business school.

Solid relationships between division and institution leaders can improve the willingness of faculty to teach in continuing education. They want to do work that is valued by the institution. Contact with influential people may cast the division in a positive light and thus aid it in recruiting faculty for instruction. As one faculty member put it:

> The director of continuing education helps to change the perception of the administration. He or she can communicate to the faculty that the perception is positive and that by teaching continuing education courses, they're not hurting their long-term standing to make a few short-term dollars. And that's a very important function, to legitimate aggressive extension activity on the part of the faculty, the fact that they're not being perceived by the university and administration as the mark of a faculty member with undesirable values. That's very important. So the director's relations with the provost, good relations with deans, these things make a career-conscious faculty member more comfortable in acting on the desire to do extension work.

Even in institutions where continuing education is extremely peripheral, solid relationships with members of the central administration,

academic deans, and members of the faculty are extremely important. Through them, division members can find out what is possible in continuing education and which programs might benefit the institution. Regular contact with those at various administrative levels is critical to securing support.

Methods of Contact

Contacts can be made in various ways: through individual meetings, committee meetings, and social events.

Individual meetings. A courtesy visit can be arranged to introduce oneself, to find out what challenges face other members of the institution, or to discuss business. The college of architecture at a large urban institution was having difficulty attracting suitable applicants to their undergraduate program, partly because it was located in a poor section of a large urban area. A staff member from continuing education learned about the problem while visiting someone on the architecture faculty. The staff member suggested that the institution advertise to high school art teachers and that the college offer a noncredit workshop through continuing education for art teachers. This arrangement would provide art education to the teachers and at the same time familiarize them with the campus. It was thought that some of the teachers might then recommend the institution to their art students.

Individual meetings also give continuing education staff members the chance to let others know how the division can help them. The president of one university said,

> One of the things I appreciate about the director of continuing education's leadership is that she or he is trying to make us all aware—that is deans, chairs, as well as vice presidents and presidents—that this too is a part of the university, an important part of the university.

Committee meetings. Many opportunities related to securing institutional support arise during committee meetings. For instance, deans' council meetings allow the division head to learn about the agendas of other people at the bargaining table. These meetings may also present an opportunity to share information about the division's accomplishments. Several university officials interviewed for this study said they appreciated being informed about these achievements, particularly as they related to the institution.

Directors of continuing education may not be included in deans' meetings. But they can ask to be included in college or department meetings when continuing education issues are to be discussed. By asking

to be included, directors turn the challenge of a closed door into an opportunity for opening the door.

In fact, one director of continuing education got support for a continuing education advisory committee from the associate provost, who appointed some people to the committee. One appointee worked in admissions and records, which supplied a ten-day enrollment report to the deans each semester. These reports had not until then included continuing education enrollments. As a result of serving on the committee, however, the admissions officer began including these figures in the report.

Serving on committees, particularly university-wide committees, reflects the concern of continuing education members toward the institution. As one director stated:

> Anything continuing education people can do that gives credibility to their loyalty to the larger interests of the institution [is helpful]; everyone assumes they'll defend their own turf, but if they can also be really perceived as caring about the issues that animate the institution, then they'll have a larger entree to resources.

Serving on committees of institutional importance not only shows concern for the institution, but also helps to foster the impression that one is a "member of the institution first and a member of continuing education second," as one director noted. The institution is most likely to support those divisions that support it. An effective way to obtain support is to be perceived as an organizational person working for the good of the whole institution, not just for one's own division.

Social events. Yet another way to show interest in the institution is by attending social events. Receptions and luncheons provide opportunities for interaction with a cross-section of people from within the institution, thus enhancing exposure of the staff person and the division. Similarly, hosting luncheons during special periods, such as holiday or graduation time, is a way of showing appreciation for administrative and faculty support and may also nourish the support process.

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Context: Adapting to the Institutional Context

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To a large extent, the culture of the institution defines what is possible for continuing education. Understanding the institution is therefore an integral part of the internal promotion process. It is particularly important to understand the mission, priorities, and problems of the parent organization, as well as its reward structure. This information can be learned from influential individuals within the organization. Information about its context, including the relationship of the division to the institution, will help shape the division.

Simply understanding the institution is not enough, however. The information gathered must be used to adapt the division to the institution's culture. Being perceived as part of, rather than apart from, the institution is critical to securing institutional support. A division may adapt to this culture in several ways: through programming, policies and procedures, and use of full-time faculty.

Programming

To gain institutional support, the programs that continuing education offers must reflect the institution's values. At the private university mentioned previously, the upper-level administration appointed a faculty committee to oversee the activities of the division of continuing education because it had offered programs, such as travel programs, that were viewed as recreational rather than educational. At the direction of the committee, the division eliminated $100,000 in programs considered to be "cultural entertainment."

To recoup the loss, the newly appointed director of continuing education guided an effort to offer "scholarly" programs instead. One of them, a visiting scholars program, attracted faculty members from several colleges and universities with similar orientations. The participants would attend a series of seminars, presented by the institution's divisions of social science and humanities three or four times per year for several days. The new program was successful because it was intellectually stimulating for both the resident faculty and the "faculty fellows." The program also reflected the values of the institution.

Policies and Procedures

According to one dean of continuing higher education:

One of my big jobs has been to convince [the faculty] that [this

> division] is an equal partner with the rest of the university in terms of quality. For some reason they have the feeling that students that go part time, and in the evening, just are not as dedicated, probably not as smart, as those who are here full time between the ages of 18 and 21.

To change the division's reputation from one of second-class education to one of "equal partner," the dean made major policy changes. The division used to be a "revolving door": if students could not maintain enrollment in another division, they could easily enroll through the division of continuing education. Because it was the open admissions college of the university, admission standards had traditionally been low.

The recently appointed dean decided to increase the standards for admission and retention, although the division remained an open admissions college. Under the new policy, if a student was dropped once from one college and once from continuing education, he or she would not be readmitted to continuing education. The dean also developed a minimum grade-point-average policy, which was strictly enforced. Another strictly enforced policy was that students must maintain a C average or better for 20 academic credits in order to become degree candidates: they did not automatically become candidates when they entered the division.

The dean told the provost and the academic deans about these policy changes at committee and individual meetings and also put them in writing. The changes and the communication enhanced the division's ability to recruit full-time faculty members—a goal of the dean.

Full-Time Faculty

Institutional leaders often view the use of full-time faculty members as an assurance of quality. Since academic departments tend to hire full-time faculty members, using them in continuing education as well may further the impression that the division fits into the institution's culture. In one case, a division that was criticized for offering low quality programs had relied on adjunct faculty. To improve its position, the division decided to use mostly full-time faculty members or advanced doctoral students. This change enhanced the level of support from the university leadership.

In another case, academic departments had been assigning part-time faculty members to teach continuing education courses. Yet the division was criticized by academic units for its poor quality programs. The dean of continuing education prepared data reflecting this fact and presented them to the academic deans. The dean argued that if quality could be better controlled by using full-time faculty members, then they should be as-

signed to teach for the division. This strategy paid off with an increase in full-time faculty members assigned to teach for the division.

Adapting to the Context

It is important to remember that programs viewed favorably at one institution may be rejected by another. For example, a degree in general studies was proposed and approved within one year at a public teaching-oriented institution, but the same degree program was rejected at a private research-oriented institution. Continuing educators must understand the institutional context so that they can establish programs viewed as part of, rather than apart from, the institution.

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Working with members of the institution to help them solve their problems or achieve their goals is an excellent way to enhance leverage for securing institutional support. But the kinds of help offered must be consistent with the values of the institution, as discussed earlier in this guide. Through their contacts, members of the division can assess the best way to assist the institution. As one director of continuing education noted:

> Good things that happen for continuing education happen not because people are committed to continuing education, but because they're committed to whatever goals and/or agenda I can show them continuing education serves, besides doing what it does.

Three ways that continuing education can assist the institution and turn challenge into opportunity are through recruitment, enrollment, and faculty assistance.

Recruitment

At times, continuing education programs such as summer youth programs attract high school students to campus. Their exposure to the university setting may be useful because a good experience can generate a student's interest in applying for admission to the university. The provost of a large public institution expressed appreciation for the summer educational camps and institutes, which provided a quality educational experience and were a public service. The provost realized that, if the students have a good camp or institute experience, they may consider applying to the institution for college.

Continuing education programs for adults can enhance university public relations, which in turn may also help recruitment. Let's return to an example used earlier, that of the seminars sponsored for scholars working at several midwestern colleges. The scholars came to campus as "faculty fellows" and participated in formal and informal dialogue with faculty from various disciplines. As an outcome, the graduate divisions of the social sciences and humanities—the areas that most visiting faculty members were interested in—saw an increase in graduate admission applications from the schools that were involved in the program. At the urging of the university's president, this program was given stable funding for at least four years, and perhaps indefinitely.

Enrollment

Some institutions are experiencing a decline in full-time student enrollment. Yet the number of part-time students enrolled through continuing education programs continues to rise. These programs may therefore be a significant factor in overall enrollments at the institution. Provided the programs are considered to be of good quality, the increased enrollment will generally be helpful in obtaining internal support.

Faculty Assistance

Securing teaching assistance is a major challenge for administrators in continuing higher education because faculty members have competing demands for teaching, along with research and committee responsibilities. The reward structure of the institution also influences the willingness of faculty members to teach for the division. The chance that they will participate is increased, however, if programs can be developed that are attractive to faculty members, that can help them solve their problems, or that facilitate their interests.

The director of continuing education at a renowned private urban institution wanted to use the teaching resources of its fine medical school to offer continuing medical education programs. To gain this support, the director met with a leader of the medical school to ask what problems it faced for the academic year.

School faculty members, the director learned, were dissatisfied with the type of patients using the clinic services—patients with common illnesses rather than rare diseases. Asking if the clinic had ever treated such diseases, the director learned that years ago a staff physician had periodically conducted seminars at the area clinics that attracted unusual cases. These clinics in return would occasionally refer such cases to the medical school's clinics. When the physician left the institution, the collaborative relationship between the school and hospital ended.

After the meeting, the director investigated the possibility of developing new collegial relationships between the medical school's staff and physicians in those clinics. As the director discovered, such relationships could indeed be established. In exchange for seminars conducted by medical school professors and clinic staff, the area clinics were willing to refer some of their patients to the medical school.

The director then approached the medical school staff member again with the following proposal:

> We want your teaching resources to help us with some of our programs, but in exchange, we will develop some of the programs in such a way that over time collegial relationships will develop

> between your staff and referral physicians who treat people with unusual diseases. Over a period of time, you will see an increase in the number of patients with unusual diseases.

The proposal enhanced the relationship between the medical school and the division of continuing education.

This example shows the benefit of linking the division's strengths to problems faced by members of the institution. It also illustrates the importance of contact and context. As a result of contact, the director identified a major problem of the medical school. The director wanted to use medical school staff for some of the division's programs because using full-time faculty members was important to officials concerned about the educational quality of programs offered by this division. Furthermore, the linkage between the two units was strengthened through the process. In this way, continuing education helped create a successful situation for the institution.

Let's consider another example of using contact, context, and collaboration effectively, this time within a public institution having a strong teaching orientation. Shortly after being appointed, the dean of continuing education noticed that the institution's summer athletic camps were organized and conducted by the coaches teaching the programs.

The dean approached the coaching staff and suggested that the division of continuing education could coordinate the camps, thereby allowing the coaches to focus fully on instruction. In exchange, the division would charge a small fee per student to cover administrative costs. For the few coaches who initially agreed, their programs ran so smoothly that within a year the division was coordinating most of the institution's athletic camps. It is significant that an assistant to the president told this story as an example of the division's resourcefulness and willingness to serve members of the institution.

Section 5
Cultivation: Building Relationships in the Institution

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The process of securing institutional support is dynamic and continuous. Old relationships must be nurtured and new ones formed when appropriate. This process can be facilitated by maintaining relationships with influential people to avoid any "surprise" information, by justifying requests with data, by submitting an annual report, and by using publicity.

Relationships to Avoid Surprises

Influential members of the organization should be kept informed about any major projects and problems in the division that may affect the institution. As one senior vice president said,

> In effect, we say keep us informed; we don't want to be surprised. I don't want to be at a fundraiser and have somebody come up to me and say, you know, "Gee how about that satellite program you people have going," and our not knowing anything about it.

Officials want to be kept informed about recruitment strategies, enrollment patterns, potential areas of growth for the division, its special programs, and any major problems that may have an impact on the institution.

Requests Justified With Data

Documenting requests is extremely important. On the basis of data about the growth potential in continuing education, the president of one institution increased resources to the division by 10 percent. That amounted to a greater than 10 percent return on the investment. As the president explained,

> This past year we purposefully increased the resources of that division by 10 percent. That [increase] was on the basis of some evidence that our continuing education program was able to be more responsive to the needs of the folks in the field. What I did, in consultation with the vice president of academic affairs, was to say, "Let's put resources there, to see if we can expand that effort." Actually that has resulted in a better than 10 percent increase in students served by the program this semester as compared to a year ago. And that's really the kind of data which I am going to be looking at and will continue to look at in terms of the division.

The more data that can be used to justify requests for resources, particularly fiscal resources, the better the chance of receiving support.

Annual Report

The annual report can be an effective means of informing members of the institution about the division's activities. In particular, it can be used to show the relationship between the division's activities and the institution's mission. The report can show how the division has furthered the mission, helped solve institutional problems, and enhanced the welfare of the institution, perhaps through recruitment, enrollment, and faculty assistance.

Publicity

Another excellent way to disseminate information about the division is through a newsletter, flyer, or brochure and through newspaper advertisements, news releases, and radio announcements. Because the public will see these items, they should enhance and be appropriate to the image of both the division and the institution.

One director of continuing education noted that the division's ad in the *Wall Street Journal* was a little too slick and had triggered some criticism from within the institution. In another case, a continuing education ad did not appropriately reflect the institution's image. In both cases, the publicity produced negative attention from members of the parent organization. Thus, regardless of the publicity used, division staff must be certain to project an image that is consistent with that of the institution. In the words of one continuing education director:

> Now that we've decided what the message is, as it were, and what we need, we need to make sure that everybody in the division understands that so that every brochure, every radio announcement, which may be primarily soliciting registrants for programs, still has all these other agendas in mind and is critiqued in view of the internal publics who will also see all those kinds of communications for compatibility with the culture of the place, for looking prestigious but not too glitzy, all those kinds of subtle things.

When promoting its own programs externally, the division should take care during the process to promote the institution favorably. Publicity, which may include using the institution's logo, provides a format for the division to showcase the institution. Good publicity can help the institution and at the same time strengthen the division's reputation within the institution.

Publicity may also be used as a strategy for turning challenge into opportunity. When the university president mentioned in the first section of this guide wanted to improve public relations, the dean of continuing education would send the president a few selected news releases about the

division-sponsored program for professionals. A division staff member would then follow up by sending the president copies of the same news items clipped from the local paper. (This process was conducted selectively so as not to inundate the president with information.) Favorably impressed with its work, the president publicly commended the division and those in the institution working with it. This commendation was an excellent way to publicize the division within the institution: it assured faculty members that teaching in continuing education might in fact work for them—certainly not against them.

Section 6
From Challenge to Opportunity

Section 1
Presenting the Self

Section 2
Contact: Maintaining Regular Contact with Influential Members of the Institution

Section 3
Context: Adapting to the Institutional Context

Section 4
Collaboration: Serving the Institution

Section 5
Cultivation: Building Relationships in the Institution

Section 6
From Challenge to Opportunity

Bibliography

In many ways, securing institutional support is a promotional task that requires continuous effort, attention, and evaluation. A central element of this task is presenting an image of the division that is consistent with the institution's image of itself. To create a division that exemplifies the values and traditions of the institution, division staff must understand the institution and adapt to it.

Securing support requires making regular contact with influential people, understanding the institutional context, and adapting the division to that context. Collaborating with members of the institution to help them achieve their goals and cultivating these relationships are also instrumental in securing institutional support. Thus relationships based on the exchange of resources can be developed. As Erving Goffman (1959) suggests, actors need leverage to capture the attention and support of their audiences. Similarly, by benefiting the institution and its members, the division will gain leverage for successfully securing various forms of institutional support.

Divisions of continuing higher education contribute to their institutions in unique and valuable ways. But the division staff, particularly the division head, must make these contributions known to the leaders, who can only support what they know about. Effective communication is central to a successful support-securing process.

Goffman goes on to stress the importance of rehearsal before a presentation to an audience. In his view, it is imperative to keep some distance from the audience so that the act is not overexposed. Indeed, preparing reports as well as selectively engaging leaders' time are critical to maintaining a favorable impression of the division.

Speaking specifically about a relationship with the institution's president, the head of continuing education at one institution said,

> I think people devoted to continuing education err on the side of not realizing the limits of his/her interests in continuing education... he/she cares about his/her agenda, not continuing education's. I succeed insofar as I demonstrate that continuing education is supportive and not a barrier to that agenda. That's very important, I don't care whether he/she believes in continuing education.

Contacts must be balanced. Too little or too much contact may create a negative impression and hinder the support-securing process. To be

effective, the contact must be couched in terms of how the division's work assists the institution.

Securing support for continuing higher education is a challenge. But it can be turned into opportunity by relating division strengths to institutional problems and priorities. These opportunities are best created by the entire division, not just by one member. As team leaders, however, division heads play a critical role because of the contact they can legitimately have with key institutional leaders and decision makers. Contact with influential members of the institution provides information about the institution's context or culture. Using this information, the division can adapt its programs so that they become part of, rather than apart from, the institution. Furthermore, the information gathered can be used to form collaborative relationships with members of the parent organization. At their best, these relationships bring success to both the division and the institution. The division can thus turn the challenges associated with securing support into golden opportunities for the division and the institution.

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